

Bird Sanctuaries Set Up on Beach

Duxbury Clipper, Thursday, July 22, 1982

A volunteer work party on July 10 posted sanctuaries on Duxbury Beach both at High Pines and Gurnet.

The first of these areas is a half mile stretch of marsh and stony frontage on Duxbury Bay just north of High Pines; the other is a similar length of rocky shore facing the Plymouth Channel west of the foot of the Gurnet Highland.

For the 15th consecutive year signs were set up requesting people to keep off those portions of the beach from half tide coming in until half tide on the ebb to reserve these areas for migrating birds that are in much need of undisturbed rest.

"The plovers and sandpipers which pass through here by the thousands during their southward migration from the far north obtain most of their food from the flats which are exposed only at low tide. Small crustaceans, worms and insects make up their diet. During their 1-4 weeks' stay in the Plymouth, Duxbury, Kingston estuary, they take in enough food to gain sufficient weight and strength for their next southerly flight. Most fly non-stop directly across the water 1500 to 2000 miles before they put down on some Caribbean tropical isle or the northeast coast of South America. Incredible though it may seem even small peeps, only 5 inches long, succeed in making this hazardous journey guided by their instinct and possibly the stars." (Quote from 7/21/77 Observations by Joseph Lund.)

Under the leadership of the late Joe Lund, these vital shore bird rest areas, the first such effort along the Atlantic flyway, have been maintained each mid-July to mid-September since 1968 when he first obtained approval of this program from the owners of the beach in cooperation with the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

Those who made up this year's work party, organized by Charlie Wood, were Brian Harrington, Manomet Bird Observatory shorebird biologist, David Clapp, director of Audubon's new South Shore Sanctuaries located in Marshfield, Jennifer Hall of Duxbury, a volunteer at Audubon, and Bob Walker of Duxbury.